

went into effect on July 15, and many were awakened to the good news that their checking and savings accounts had been increased because of this new child tax credit.

It was part of the American Rescue Plan, the proposal by President Biden to get America back on its feet. You remember that plan, almost \$2 trillion. It was an important infusion into our economy. Money within that plan was being spent on the administration of vaccines across America. In addition to that, money was available for small businesses to receive forgivable loans. And this provision, that of enhancing the child tax credit, was an important part of it as well.

We have had tax credits in the past for families with children, but this was an especially important one because it was fully refundable, which meant it went to the lower-income families who might not have had enough income to merit a tax responsibility. This now is fully refundable, so there is no tax responsibility necessary to receive the payment. It also was a benefit that extended beyond poor and low-income families to middle-income families across America. Some of these families with this payment of \$300 a month for each child under the age of 6 and \$250 a month for those between 6 and 17 would receive resources which they desperately need to make certain that their children have a fighting chance.

We are especially proud of the fact that this infusion of cash into the hands of many families will literally mean it will lift them above the poverty line in America. Almost half of the kids in poverty will be spared that by this tax credit. So it has a direct and important impact.

I had a press conference last Friday in Chicago with one of the parents who will be benefited by this. Her name is Susana Salgado. She is a mother of three—an 11-year-old, a 16-year-old, and a 23-year-old. Her family relies on her husband's income. He works as a restaurant worker in Chicago to pay the bills, but when the pandemic hit, his hours were cut drastically. A return to normal remains elusive for people like Susana Salgado because, at the same time the family's livelihood vanished, their cost of living increased.

During the pandemic, as parents know well, schooling moved into the home and the high-speed internet connection became an absolute necessity for her kids to keep up in school. Thanks to the enhanced child tax credit, Susana can finally afford her monthly internet bill. It sounds like a small thing, but if the alternative is a child falling behind a grade in school, it is a critical family decision. That means her two younger children can keep up with their studies and her oldest son can remain in college. Something as basic as that can mean the difference in a young child's progress in his life.

So I salute President Biden for the American Rescue Plan, which helped to

distribute vaccines across America, helped small businesses get back on their feet, and is helping millions of Americans and children and families as of this day. I am sorry that there was not one single Republican vote in support of that proposal, but I believe it was money well spent and continues to benefit this country. We have a lot of work to do in this country.

I will close by saying this: I was on radio shows this morning in downstate Illinois. Chicago, and the Chicagoland, area have been able to get vaccinated to a level where they are starting to breathe a little easier in anticipating children going back to school in the fall, businesses reopening, and people getting out and about. You can just feel it in the air. Yet that is not the case all over the United States.

The City of Los Angeles, I understand, is opposed to a new mask requirement, which, unfortunately, evidences the fact that there are still too many infections these days related to COVID-19. Unfortunately, as Dr. Fauci and others have said, these infections are reflected in people who have not yet been vaccinated, by and large, and it is an indication that we can't let up on our effort to continue vaccinations across America. It is the only way to successfully put this pandemic to rest and return to normal life in America.

To those who are not vaccinated, I am sure they are not watching C-SPAN for advice, but I hope they will turn to a doctor or a nurse or to someone they trust in the community and hear about the safety of these vaccines, which have been safely administered to millions of people across the United States.

If each and every one of us accepts our personal responsibility to get vaccinated to protect ourselves, our families, those we love, and those all around us, we will finally bring this pandemic to an end. At this point, there are many, many who are still holding back. I hope they will reconsider that position.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). The Republican whip.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senators CORNYN, GRASSLEY, and I be allowed to complete our remarks before the scheduled rollcall votes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

FOR THE PEOPLE ACT

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, it has been all political theater all the time lately as the Democrats attempt to manufacture a crisis that will allow them to pass their partisan Federal takeover of State election law.

There was President Biden's overwrought speech in Philadelphia last week warning that election laws being passed in various States are "the most dangerous threat to voting and the integrity of free and fair elections in our history."

That is right, in our Nation's history.

Apparently, post-Civil War voter suppression laws and poll taxes and other atrocities don't hold a candle to what is happening today in places like Georgia, where—the horror—only election officials will be able to hand out water to those in line at the polls.

Then, of course, there were the Texas Democrats' antics as they flew to Washington via a private jet to shut down the Texas Legislature and prevent election legislation from being passed there, and the Senate Democrats' field hearing in Georgia yesterday to highlight the supposed horrors of Georgia's mainstream election law.

In his speech last week, President Biden mentioned stopping the spread of disinformation, which is an ironic statement when the Democrats are engaging in one of the most massive campaigns of disinformation we have ever seen, because—and let's be very clear—the narrative the Democrats are peddling, which is that States are engaging in a massive campaign of voter suppression, is simply false.

In other years, I doubt whether any of the State voting laws that have been passed would have been more than a blip in the national news because they are nothing more than ordinary, mainstream updates to State voting guidelines. The Georgia law that has provoked so much Democratic hysteria is not only squarely in the mainstream when it comes to State election laws, but it is actually, in some ways, more permissive than voting laws in some Democratic-led States.

A piece in the New York Times, hardly a newspaper that carries water for Republicans, concluded that the voting provisions of the Georgia law are "unlikely to significantly affect turnout or Democratic chances."

In fact, the piece notes that Georgia's law could "plausibly even increase turnout."

Meanwhile, the Washington Post Fact Checker column noted again: "The law does not put up roadblocks to Black Americans registering to vote." That from the Washington Post Fact Checker.

And yet Democrats have repeatedly asked us to believe that this law is "Jim Crow on steroids" and part of "the most significant test of our democracy since the Civil War." Those are quotes, actual quotes, from Democrats.

That is right, since the Civil War. Apparently, segregation and the horrors of Jim Crow are nothing compared to Georgia's adjustment of its regulations on no-excuse absentee voting, which isn't even allowed in some Democrat-led States like New York.

It is almost comical, except that it is not, because there is nothing funny about Democrats irresponsibly evoking the horrors of Jim Crow to convince Americans that reasonable reforms to election laws are really a dastardly plot to suppress votes.

There is nothing amusing about Democrats attempting to deceive the

American people in order to pass their election legislation because that is exactly—exactly—what Democrats are doing.

Democrats have been determined to pass H.R. 1, their Federal takeover of State election law, since 2019. Back in 2019, of course, they told us we needed it because our democracy was broken, but then the 2020 elections happened and, lo and behold, Democrats won, and all of a sudden our democracy was working fine—a record turnout, I might add, in the 2020 election, the largest since the year 1900.

But Democrats still want to pass H.R. 1, now because, as both the Speaker of the House and the House Democratic whip have openly admitted, they think it will improve their electoral chances, and so they have manufactured a crisis in the hope of convincing the American people of the need to pass Democratic legislation.

There is a reason that Senate Democrats haven't managed to pass H.R. 1 so far, and that is because it is a terrible bill. The bill would seize power from States when it comes to regulating and administering elections, an authority that States have held, literally, since the founding.

It would implement public funding of political campaigns, which would mean that billions of government dollars, money that belongs to the American taxpayer, would go to funding yard signs and attack ads—I am sure something the American taxpayers would be really happy to see.

It would impose onerous new requirements and restrictions on political speech. It would open up private Americans to retaliation and intimidation simply for making a donation to support a cause that they believe in.

It would effectively eliminate States' voter ID requirements. It would politicize the IRS by allowing the IRS to consider organizations' beliefs when deciding whether or not to grant them tax-exempt status, and the list goes on.

No less an organization than the American Civil Liberties Union opposed—opposed—H.R. 1 in the last Congress because the bill would “unconstitutionally burden speech and associational rights.”

Let me just repeat that for emphasis. The American Civil Liberties Union opposed this legislation because it would “unconstitutionally burden speech and associational rights.”

In his speech last week, President Biden expressed concern about States like Georgia “moving from independent election administrators who work for the people to polarized state legislatures and partisan actors who work for political parties.”

It made me wonder if the President even knows what is in H.R. 1 because H.R. 1 would make the Federal Election Commission, the primary enforcer of election law in this country, into a partisan body.

Instead of an independent Commission, evenly divided between Demo-

crats and Republicans, the FEC would become, to borrow the President's words, a partisan actor that works for political parties.

If the President is concerned about independent election administrators becoming partisan actors, perhaps he should take a look at revising his party's legislation.

Since they have so far been unable to get their partisan election takeover through the Senate, Democrats are now threatening to include election measures in the partisan tax-and-spending bill that they are planning to force through Congress using rules which allow them to evade objections from the Senate minority.

Their idea is to provide financial incentives for States to adopt Democrats' preferred election standards. I suspect it is an abuse of Senate budget rules that will hopefully not make it through the legislative process. But it is another disturbing sign of how committed Democrats are to shoving through their partisan election measure.

For the sake of our democracy, let's hope that they will continue to be unsuccessful.

While I am mentioning free speech and troubling narratives coming from the White House, I want to mention the White House Press Secretary's comments last week.

The Press Secretary noted that the Biden administration is “flagging problematic posts for Facebook that spread disinformation” and later stated that if individuals are banned on one social media platform, they should be banned on all platforms. Wow.

Now, there is no question that private companies have the right to moderate activity and content on their platforms—although, for the sake of the free exchange of ideas and a culture of freedom of speech, they should be very transparent, principled, and accountable about doing so.

We all remember the backpedaling that recently occurred when media and social media realized that they might have too hastily censored the theory that the coronavirus originated in a Wuhan lab.

But while private companies have a right to police information on their sites, the government cannot be in the middle of colluding with social media platforms to censor Americans' speech. And the Biden administration has no business telling Facebook or Twitter whom they should ban from their platforms.

We condemn governments in other countries, like the Chinese Communist Party, that do exactly this. We condemned the Cuban Government just last week for shutting down their population's access to the internet in the face of widespread protests.

If the government gets into censoring disinformation on social media, as compared to, say, terrorist propaganda, where does it end?

As we are rapidly finding out, “disinformation” tends to mean what-

ever those with censorship power want it to mean.

Is the Biden administration going to start pushing social media companies to censor anything that contradicts its narrative on the supposed voting rights crisis? Is it going to suggest that anyone defending States' election laws is spreading misinformation?

The best way to counter misinformation about lifesaving vaccines is not censorship; it is broadly sharing more persuasive and more accurate information.

The White House Press Secretary's casual admission of a Presidential administration actively monitoring Americans and colluding with social media companies to censor information is deeply troubling, and I am concerned that the Biden administration is moving us down the road toward government control of Americans' speech.

I would like to see the White House worrying about its own campaign of disinformation on State voting laws. That would be a better use of its time than trampling on freedom of speech by censoring Americans' activities on social media.

I yield the floor.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Texas.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, yesterday, the majority leader teed up the first procedural vote on an infrastructure bill that no one has seen yet.

Our colleagues on both sides of the aisle have been hard at work for weeks negotiating in good faith to get a balanced agreement on an issue that virtually everyone supports. Infrastructure is not a partisan issue.

But at this time, we have no details about how this deal would achieve our common goals. There is no bill text. We don't know what is in and what is out, no information about how it will be paid for and no score from the Congressional Budget Office to tell us whether the proposed pay-fors are credible.

Now, we have been through an extraordinary pandemic, during which we have done some pretty extraordinary things when it comes to spending at the Federal level.

I think the closest equivalent to the pandemic is World War II. Of course, this was a domestic war or battle against the virus, trying to deal with the public health consequences and the economic consequences as well.

I voted for trillions of dollars of Federal spending, something I never thought I would do in the face of an emergency, a global emergency.

But there is no emergency that exists for an infrastructure bill. This is part of the bread and butter of what governments do at the local level, the State level, and at the Federal level, and it is simply irresponsible and reckless to borrow more money from future generations and to throw gasoline on the fire that is already burning when it comes to inflation in pursuit of a bill